

Episode 4: Evaluating the Credibility of News and Information

Opening music

HOST: Welcome back to "Media Literacy 101," the radio series that aims to educate and empower listeners to navigate the media landscape in a critical and informed way.

Soundbite 1: How do we know if information is credible?

HOST: What we see online is dictated by complex algorithms that profile and classify us based on our likes and searches. Advertising can then be targeted and customised to give greater revenue to the social media company. This also means that we are most likely to attract information that already resonates with us and connect with people who all have similar views. If everyone in our network is believing and sharing the same information it just confirms our bias and makes it more difficult to look critically at any of the data we are receiving. We have already learned in our first programme that as we get older we are more trusting of relationships including online contacts and also more likely to take information as truth the more we hear it.

Being aware of these algorithms and the unbalanced information we are receiving is a first step in looking at information more critically.

Soundbite 2: Tips for Evaluating News Sources

HOST: But with so much information available online, it can be difficult to know what to trust. Here are some tips for evaluating the credibility of news sources:

Firstly, when we're looking at a news item, we need to try to establish if it is

1. **Valid or Accurate** - based on data that can be verified and is not misleading
2. **Inaccurate** - information that is misleading by either having been manipulated or not completed.
3. **False** - information that has been disproved by data.
4. **Unsustainable** - information that has no available data to either disprove or confirm.

There are a number of ways we can do that.

- Look for sources that have a good reputation for accuracy and impartiality. Check the domain name of the source of information to see if it comes from a reputable site. Websites with the following domains (the end of the URL) usually produce reliable information:
 - .gov (Government Agency)
 - .org (Registered Organisation)
 - .edu (Educational Institution)

- ❑ Look for the blue badge or check to see if the account has been authenticated ..many media outlets and public figures have these.
- ❑ Check the author's credentials and expertise in the subject matter
- ❑ Make sure that domain names match the name of an organisation. There may be discrepancies in spelling.
- ❑ Check that there is contact information and an "About" page when looking at source organisations or media outlets.
- ❑ Look for sources that provide evidence and support for their claims
- ❑ Check when the article was posted, Is it old news that is being used out of context or an old photo that is being used to mislead or manipulate.
- ❑ Be wary of sources that use sensational or biased language. Most fake news stories post the headline in capital letters with exclamation marks.
- ❑ Is the article triggering an emotional response such as fear, panic, guilt or empathy? These "seeded" posts are planted to encourage people to share widely.
- ❑ Is the post going viral on platforms that are not vetted or poorly monitored?
- ❑ Be skeptical of information that confirms your pre-existing beliefs or opinions.
- ❑ Be mindful of how you word your online searches. For example, use phrases like "iphone and Android comparison" rather than "Is iphone better than Android". With the latter, your search results will produce information to support the iPhone being better than Android.

Soundbite 3: Red Flags to Watch Out For

HOST: There are certain red flags to watch out for when evaluating the credibility of news sources:

- * Sensational headlines that are meant to grab your attention or create an emotional response
- * No author or source listed
- * Lack of evidence or support for claims
- * Use of language that is biased or partisan

Soundbite 4: The Role of Fact-Checking Organisations

HOST: Fact-checking organisations play an important role in helping to separate fact from fiction.

These organizations review news stories and claims to determine their accuracy. Some popular fact-checking organisations include:

Snopes: [snopes.com/](https://www.snopes.com/)

PolitiFact: [politifact.com](https://www.politifact.com/)

Fact Check: [factcheck.org/](https://www.factcheck.org/)

BBC Reality Check: bbc.com/news/reality-check

Channel 4 Fact Check: channel4.com/news/factcheck

Reverse image search from Google: google.com/reverse-image-search

Soundbite 5: Guest Speaker (Journalist maybe)

HOST: We are joined today by who is going to talk to us of some experiences they have had with misleading or false reporting.

Soundbite 6: Conclusion

HOST: In our next episode we'll take a look at online media in a bit more depth and explain some of the terminology that is associated with technology associated with false news.

HOST: Be sure to tune in next week for the fourth episode of "Media Literacy 101." In the meantime, don't forget to check out our website for more information and resources on media literacy.

Closing music

HOST: Thank you for tuning in to "Media Literacy 101." Until next time, stay informed, stay curious, and stay media literate.

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